

#1625

no. 22

THE
SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

OF

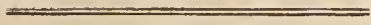
THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN MISSIONS

CONNECTED WITH THE

SOCIETY OF INQUIRY ON MISSIONS,

IN THE

Theological Seminary, [✓]Princeton, N. J.



JANUARY 1, 1833.



REPORT.

When the events of the past year which bear upon missions in heathen lands are combined into one view their aspect is interesting and important. We may see every where the symptoms of a mighty ruin commencing amongst the antique structures of Pagan superstition. With humble and adoring gratitude we thank God that the indications of his Providence are each year becoming more auspicious. Our peculiar duty in this report is to lay before you the foreign missionary occurrences of the past year. These shall be so arranged as to show that much of the heathen world has passed through all, or almost all, of the steps requisite to prepare it for the immediate reception of the gospel. In the moral wilderness, throughout vast tracts, the forests have been cut down, the rocks and bushes cleared away. Nothing remains but that men, hard-working men, should plough up the land and sow seed there for eternity. Many hold back from their duty to the heathen because of a secret feeling that all are not yet ready. Our own land seems to have a prior claim. Here the exertions of ministers will be felt at once. They may go right onward in the work of converting men. Instinct leads to the field where present fruit may be gathered. This is doubtless one of the chief reasons why such an extraordinary disproportion of ministers remains in the United States, whilst here and there, two or three, wander to the heathen. To combat this idea we will show that there are millions abroad who may be reached now, who will, many of them at least, be converted so soon as the Gospel is fairly preached to them. All of us will admit that it is the gracious purpose of God, that unless there are special obstacles in the way, the Gospel shall work mightily in some, whenever it is preached with sincerity, with humility and in purity. We will further show that in many places where obstacles still exists there is a prospect of their being soon dissipated. The voice of the trumpet is not an uncertain sound. All things conspire to animate the armies of the living God. Eighteen hundred years ago the Son of God issued the command to invade "every nation." The Providence of God now re-iterates the order, and no individuals under the whole heaven are more appropriately or more certainly bound to obey than we who compose this society.

To lay before you the details of missionary operations and success would not be expedient. It is more advisable to select facts, important in themselves or indicative of important changes in the moral condition of the world. Of the former class are the discoveries relative to Africa, the partial change in the policy of the British government of India and the prospects of still greater changes. Within this class of facts will also come the war in western Asia. This war, it must be confessed has not opened a way for the immediate spread of the Gospel, but rather the reverse. Before long,

however, we have all reason to hope, that this very conflict will open in that desert a highway for our God.

No information has been communicated during the past year which seems superior in interest to that given by the Landers concerning Africa. Their tour, though not missionary, bears directly upon missions. The researches of the late captain Clapperton laid open the same facts substantially but this scarcely detracts from the value of a book which confirms and enlarges the ideas already formed respecting that continent. The condition of much of Africa redeems our assertion that there are millions of heathen now accessible to the Gospel. The Landers travelled a country, beautiful as our own, inviting the eye by the rugged magnificence of bare granite mountains or by the gentle beauties of picturesque vales and sloping verdure. Forests, whose awful solitude is enlivened by the quick motion of birds and insects, full of life and brilliant with the richest tints of purple crimson, and gold. The travellers tell us of scenes more like *oriental* dreams of romance than anything we heretofore have imagined of Africa. At times they passed amidst trees whose foliage exhaled native perfumes and were illuminated each night by radiant glow-worms. They pierced through tangled brakes of unknown flowers and from them emerged upon large tracts of well cultivated soil, interspersed with large villages and even large cities. Subtracting from these descriptions all which may be fairly imputed to excited imagination there will remain sufficient evidence to prove that much of Africa can vie in beauty with any part of the globe. The people whom they found were evidently just in the state best fitted for the operation of missionaries. Like other heathen they are universally depraved. Mr Lander says of the people of Badagry "we have longed to discover a solitary virtue lingering among the natives of this place, but as yet our search has been ineffectual." This remark might have been extended to most of the places they visited, to all indeed, if by *virtue* they meant any Christian grace.

The worship of devils is not an uncommon form of religion—human sacrifices also. On one occasion they were sickened by the cries of three hundred poor wretches who were doomed to the victims of this infernal worship. This people surely need the efforts of missionaries, and such is their veneration for the whites, almost every where, that they would doubtless lend a ready attention to their instructions. They were very generally respected. They were called "the children of heaven." On one occasion, when they solicited from a native prince, the life of a person condemned to die, it was immediately granted. In this case it was very evident that the vanity of the monarch was highly excited by the fact that Europeans asked a favour of him. Mis

missionaries would certainly find few difficulties in preaching the Gospel in all its power to a people so prepossessed in their favour. Nor could a senseless idolatry oppose a very formidable barrier. Even where the Mohammedans have spread their wretched delusion it has taken but a slight hold on the people compared with its iron grasp upon the Asiatic Moslem. The steamboat expedition which is probably now ascending the rushing flood of the Quorra will still more impress the natives with their exceeding inferiority to the whites. In a few years the tide of intercourse will be so augmented that all the western half of Africa will be pervaded by a civilized influence. In view of this, and with the design of placing the Gospel among the foremost of our gifts to Africa, two missionary expeditions to that continent have been commenced during the past year. One is sent by our Methodist brethren, and it is stated in a late number of the African Repository that Rev. Melville B. Cox has sailed to Liberia. The same vessel was to have conveyed the other expedition, sent by the Western Foreign Missionary Society. Our brethren John B. Pinney, and Joseph W. Barr were, as you well know, to have gone together on this enterprise. The former has probably sailed. The latter heard the midnight voice of the Son of God, commanding him to close his earthly labours—we humbly, but assuredly, believe that he is now joining in the incessant praises of the blood-bought multitudes of heaven. Our statements respecting present missionary operations in Africa are necessarily meager—especially since they are confined to those which have occurred since our last Annual Report. It is our strong hope of the future regeneration of her people which is chiefly interesting. It is proper to state in respect to Sierra Leone that, according to our last accounts, the labours of the European missionaries here continued to be successful though not blessed by any remarkable encouragement. Mrs. Hannah Kilham, a member of the Society of Friends, who had for two or three years been actively engaged in teaching the doctrines of the Cross to the heathen near that colony, died, whilst prosecuting her evangelical labours. Rather more than a year ago, there were in London, three Danish missionaries preparing to join their brethren already engaged on the Gold Coast. We cannot speak with certainty, but we think it probable, that some time in the year 1832, they proceeded to their destination.

Africa is not the only portion of the earth, where, as we hope, the red cross flag of Zion, will soon float in victory. The transactions of the past year, which will influence the destiny of India, are weighty with importance. When in May last, the illustrious statesman, who now presides in the British ministry, effected the passage of the Reform Bill, he originated a course of policy which must, before long, throw open the whole of British India, to the efforts of as many missionaries as can be poured in. Hitherto the practice has been barely to tolerate missionaries at a few places. Even those from England were viewed with a suspicious eye. In Ceylon, the door has for many years been absolutely barred

against fresh missionaries from America. This was owing, doubtless, to the rigid monopoly and exclusive power secured to the East India Company by their Charter. They were jealous of every thing which had the slightest appearance of interfering with their government of the natives. Jealousy is contagious, and the English government soon became equally, or even more strict, with respect to Ceylon, which island had been transferred to them by the company. Every where the American missionaries have remained merely by sufferance. Very soon the Charter of the East India Company will expire. Whether it will be renewed is of course uncertain. Even if it should be, we may rest assured that its new provisions, arranged by a liberal government, will break down all the hard restrictions now existing. We deem this as something more than mere conjecture.

The appointment of that evangelical and eminent divine, Daniel Wilson, to be Bishop of Calcutta, exhibits a disposition in the British government, very favourable to pure Christianity. During the past year, they have also actually withdrawn the prohibition of sending new missionaries to Ceylon. These circumstances are important in themselves, but much more so as affording promise for the future. The American missionary station in Bombay, continues much in its former condition, except that three of the missionaries have been detached to form a new station at Ahmednugger. This city is on the high ground which lies near the Ghaut mountains, and is surrounded by a thickly peopled country. You know that one of these three, William Hervey, a member of this society, has been cut off by the spasmodic cholera. Five or six Hindoos have already been converted at this station.

We have no wish to exaggerate the importance of any missionary field, nor is there need when we challenge your warmest sympathies, and your active efforts for Hindustan. One hundred and twenty millions of people inhabit that country—all speaking languages similar to each other, languages not very difficult of acquisition. Any one of us so soon as he had learned their tongue, might preach to them by millions if his bodily strength did not fail. Add to this that many of them have been converted within the last ten or twenty years and thus have proved that there is nothing in caste, nothing in their education, nothing in their heathen stupidity, ignorance or indolence, which necessarily hardens their hearts so that the Gospel cannot enter. Compared with the swarthy myriads who are still in their sins the converts are as nothing. They are no more missed from the remaining mass than the waters this day exhaled to heaven by the sun are missed from the immense ocean. Few, scattered, and despised, rejected by their countrymen, they are far more than are required to justify the assertion that whoever preaches the truth in India may hope for the immediate conversion of multitudes. No difficulties exist which have not been overcome in hundreds of cases. Each day increases the prospect of additional success. A spirit of inquiry is diffusing its awakening

influences upon cities, and over whole provinces. Prejudices are relaxing. Above all, we may hope that the time is nigh at hand when the Holy Spirit will "breathe upon these slain that they may live." The ordinary course of God's dealing has been to suffer his missionaries to labour with little fruit for five, ten, twenty years, and then to take the work into his own hands and show with what infinite ease he can establish his empire of grace wherever he pleases. In India the missionaries have for the most part been faithfully toiling through a long night. Now we may hope, from the analogy of other places, the morning cometh. When that day of grace shall arise upon the palmy plains and snow topped mountains of Hindostan it will be the day of salvation to thousands and to millions. Were we all to go to India tomorrow, our departure would scarcely be felt by the churches at home, hundreds more would in a few years occupy our places. Were we thus to go to India we would be felt from the sources of the Ganges to Cape Comorin. A few hundred additional missionaries would probably turn the scale there and secure the triumph of the Cross.

As we arrange our statements merely in reference to their more or less important bearing upon the prosperity of missions, the next fact to which we direct attention in reviewing the past year is *the war in Asiatic Turkey*. It is well known that for a considerable time past the authority of the Grand Seigneur over the Pacha of Egypt was rather nominal than real. The latter has made considerable advances in knowledge of European sciences and arts, and has introduced them to some extent among his people. He has organized schools and engaged European teachers to instruct them, employed European officers in the drilling of his armies, and European artizans in the construction of his vessels and munitions of war. The progress of improvement in the military discipline of his forces has been so great that he has for some time felt himself an equal to his acknowledged Sovereign. Excited by a desire for independence and for conquest, he has taken such measures that a rupture between himself and the Grand Seigneur some time since terminated in an open war. The armies of Egypt were poured forth upon Syria, and with great advantages in their discipline and not much inferior numbers they formed a fearful antagonist for the Turkish forces. Under the command of Ibrahim Pacha, who leads his father's troops in Syria, and is probably one of the most intrepid generals of the present day, the Egyptian army laid siege to St. Jean d'Acre, a fortress famous for its strength and for its importance in the events of former times, and on the 26th of April last, it was surrendered to him. He then marched on the Turkish army. They met at Homs, and there Ibrahim gained a crushing victory. Hussein Pacha, the Turkish general, though scarcely inferior in ability to his great antagonist, was unable to rally from this terrible defeat. Ibrahim improved his advantage by immediately investing Aleppo. This important city surrendered with little or no resistance. The whole country now lies open before him. For aught we can see, he may advance and do what he pleases. At least we

know of none but the Almighty who can restrain him. These facts are of immense importance in a two-fold aspect. In the first place they augur the downfall of the Turkish power. Baffled by these mighty rebels the Sultan is now in a very precarious condition. Greece, Egypt, Palestine, Syria are lost to him. How much more is to be torn away we cannot tell. His armies are scattered, his treasures expended or taken by the enemy, his fortresses stormed. Assuredly this looks very like the beginning of a fatal eclipse of his authority. The deep seated, ignorant, bigotted dominion of the Turks in Asia has ever been a deadly foe to Christianity. The simple fact therefore that this seems verging rapidly to its dissolution is cause for gratitude.

The other point of view in which the victories of Ibrahim are interesting to us has already been noticed. The comparative liberality of the Egyptians, and the desire of Mohammed Ali to improve his people are very favourable. We do not mean that these men will renounce their false religion or that they will facilitate the preaching of the gospel. We suppose that they will not even tolerate it, if attempted openly. The advantages to be hoped from them are that they will not oppress that so long as the missionaries act prudently they will not countenance those who oppose them. What is still more important, they will probably encourage the diffusion of European science, and civilized ideas—this will tend to religious liberality. When the tumult of war subsides our missionaries in Syria will be better circumstanced than ever. It is not impossible, nor even improbable, that some now alive will at a future date preach to Mohammedans in Syria with less opposition than is now experienced from the Greeks and Armenians. We are not to delay our efforts until all things are tranquil there, until they have grown so liberal that we may come and convert them. Many missionaries should now be acquiring their languages and manners. Years are required for these studies. Preparation for future action should now be made. When the convulsions and ruin of nations have ceased, the missionary should be ready to go through the length and breadth of the land with the offers of eternal life. If, at that moment, the church is ready to act and does act, the results will be very great.

Having presented those facts which seem of most importance; we proceed to sketch a bird's eye view of the whole world in respect to missions. The object of this will be merely to point out the light from the darkness. We comment furthest from home.

The islands of the Pacific are now half evangelized. In the Friendly and Society Islands and the adjacent groupes there are between three and four thousand native communicants, upwards of seven thousand scholars and more than twenty thousand who habitually attend the preaching of the gospel. In the Sandwich Islands, one third of the people are in the missionary schools. There are now about five hundred communicants. More than twice that number give ground for hope, by their admission into the church is judiciously delayed. On the New South Wales coast of New

Holland and in the large islands of New Zealand and Van Dieman's land there are some missions. They have made a few converts, but have been chiefly engaged in learning the languages, in translating &c.

Ascending from Australasia to the Indian Archipelago we find two or three missionaries, scattered amidst the sea-girt nations of Java and Sumatra. In China there are a few at Canton, and there are some in Siam, Burmah, and Malacca, and the islands of Singapore and Pinang. The Baptists in Burmah have been, and are, very successful; the others have diffused much light, but as yet have made few converts. In Siam and the Indian islands there are multitudes of Chinese. The missionaries act on them without danger from the laws of China. Should these be converted, they may easily carry Christianity into the very heart of the empire.

Of the other missionary fields in Asia, India, and Syria, we have already spoken. In Constantinople, Smyrna, Aleppo, and perhaps some other cities of Asia Minor and Syria, there are missionaries, who chiefly instruct the Greek children; reaching and distributing tracts as they find opportunity. There are some German missionary colonies near the Caucasus mountains. At Kassar and Astrachan, a few Scottish missionaries have laboured with little success. In Siberia there are two or three stations which as yet have produced little effect on the surrounding Tartars. Such is the religious condition of Asia. Almost all of the immense empire of China, of Siberia, Tartary, Persia, and Asiatic Turkey, and all of Japan, Bucharia, Thibet, Cabul, and Arabia, are entirely destitute of Christian instruction. These regions contain nearly four hundred and fifty millions of people, considerably more than unfold the entire population of North and South America united. For the remaining hundred and fifty millions, who chiefly inhabit India, there are less than two hundred European and American missionaries. These people comparatively favoured, are not quite so well supplied as the United States would be with twenty ministers, from the St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico, and from the Atlantic to the Rocky mountains, that is, less than one to each State.

Of Africa, we have already in part spoken. In Egypt there are one or two English missionaries. Two others penetrated to Abyssinia. They were all received, but at last, were obliged by political disturbances to withdraw. One has since died. Southern Africa richly rewards the English and Moravian missionaries. More than three thousand natives now belong to their churches. The missionaries in Madagascar and Mauritius, have as yet found little visible success. In Madagascar however, there are nearly three thousand children in the missionary schools, and, at times, other indications are favourable.

Of the western coast of Africa, we need not say anything to our preceding statements. Along the northern coast a few missionaries occasionally visit Tunis, Tripoli, and Algiers. We not know of any permanent establishment made there in those places.

Greece and the Greek islands of Syra, Corfu, and Tenos, and the island of Malta, have a few missionaries, who are chiefly engaged in teaching schools, and in publishing books and tracts. Eventually these exertions will, by the grace of God, regenerate that portion of the globe.

Upon our own continent and the American islands, there are many missionaries. There are some in Guiana, in South America. At Buenos Ayres and in Mexico, some attempts have been made, chiefly to diffuse Bibles and Tracts. In the West Indies the Moravians, Methodists, and Baptists, have been labouring amongst the negroes with humble but heroic devotion, and have met with great success and great persecutions. Hated, calumniated and even imprisoned by the white islanders, these holy men have been so blessed, that their churches number more than eighty thousand converts. Amongst most of our North American Indians, little has occurred. The Choctaws have partially emigrated to their new location, on the Arkansaw and Red Rivers, this change of residence has proved very unfavourable to the missionaries. The Cherokees still continue in their own country, and we regret to add that the unjust imprisonment of Messrs. Worcester and Butler, is still continued. There are missionary stations in Upper Canada, and near the lakes.

The only stations yet to be noticed, are those in Labrador and Greenland. There the indefatigable Moravians have been successfully at work. In these countries they have thirty-one missionaries, and about twenty-five hundred converts. Self-devoted, and lofty contempt for the allurements of this world has long characterized this mission. It is a northern light, which, like that in the skies, illuminates a bleak expanse of ice and snow, whilst it attracts the admiration of far off nations.

We cannot close this view of missions, without alluding to a severe blow sustained by the cause in our own country. In our last report, we spoke with joy of the appointment of Mr. Cornelius as Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. The church has since been called to lament his death. We cannot understand why such men as Cornelius, Hervey and Barr, should be called away in the full flush and vigour of their usefulness, but what we know not now we shall know hereafter. The Lord doeth all things well.

Here one or two inferences naturally arise from the preceding statements. We have said that the Moravian Baptist and Methodist missionaries have eighty thousand negroes in their West Indian Churches. This is more than six hundred for each minister. These negroes were heathen before their conversion, as truly heathen as the people of Madagascar or Japan. It is therefore a fact, and consequently absolutely certain, that one or two hundred missionaries, at work, in one well selected spot, may, through the power of God, convert more heathen than the same number of ministers would convert at home. The average of these missionary churches is beyond that of the most religious section of the United States. To

secure this we must have enough men. Ten missionaries would labour for years with scarce one convert, but if one hundred were sent to that place they might thoroughly subdue it. Ten regiments will not merely make an impression tenfold as great as one regiment, but much more. One thousand soldiers invading a country would not have one tenth of the success of ten thousand. Where ten legions would in a day achieve a complete conquest, a single legion might be perfectly harmless, unable to move from its strong holds for fear of being cut to pieces. This explains the comparatively little success of modern missionaries. There are not enough men in the heathen world to produce a very sensible impression. Send so many, that the idolater will be told of his sin and blindness with frequency and he will soon feel that it is a serious matter. Now, the Brahmin or Malay who hears of Jesus may be six months or six years before he hears of him again. Then the faint original impression is long lost. It would not be so if there were sufficient missionaries to meet him at every turn. We now speak of ascertained facts. In the Pacific, and West Indian islands, where the missionaries are so numerous as thus to work upon the population, the result has been precisely what we assert. One or two thousand additional missionaries, distributed through India, Africa and Indo China, would within ten years, if God gave his usual blessings, make so many converts that all the power of earth and hell would be insufficient to extinguish the growing light. Those nations might then be left to their own native teachers, trained and guided by a small number of Americans or Europeans. A few thousand missionaries in Asia would by themselves, or their converts, be the means of converting many millions. If they stayed at home they probably would convert only a few hundred thousand. Even of these many might sparingly receive the truth from some other source. We speak with perfect certainty of the conversion of tens and hundreds of millions of the heathen, since the word of God is pledged that they shall be brought in, and the uniform history of the church testifies that this is to be done primarily by a comparatively small, yet sufficient, number of missionaries, and ultimately by their action upon each other when the heaven begins its work.

How this sufficient number of missionaries may be procured is very obvious. Simply by each one resolving that, without waiting for others, he will go himself. Others will follow. The spirit is now greatly increasing. But the heathen will never be converted if men delay going to them until they are sure that an adequate number will follow.

For a moment we will suppose that our calculation of the success of one or two thousand addi-

tional missionaries is inaccurate. What then? What if two thousand could only clear away the ground a little more, and that ten or twenty thousand would be required after them? This preparatory work *must* be done by some one. He who lays the foundation participates in building the house as much as he who finishes the structure. The obscure missionary who dies and is forgotten after translating part of the Bible into some barbarian language accomplishes that which must be done before the millions that speak it can hear the truth. Many illusions will vanish if we look at the final vast, and certain result, rather than to the present effect. A few thousand men who were permitted to convert only twice or threefold their own number, but who thus secured the ultimate conversion of hundreds of millions in India or China, would really accomplish far more than if they should stay in America and convert every soul on the continent.

Half of Asia and all of Africa would soon be Christianized if but one or two thousand went to light up the flame. Nor would these men be missed from home. The exertion which their departure and their example would extort from the slumbering churches would alone repay the loss by the religious excitement it must occasion. Can we not trust God so far as, for a few years, to send away a large proportion of our new ministers? Even if too many go, their loss will soon be supplied by the revivals of religion which at that time of new born energy in the churches, would be more numerous than ever. The more than one million professing Christians added to the eight thousand evangelical ministers now in the land and those students of theology who could not possibly go abroad, would surely for a few years at least sustain Christianity at home. The Sabbath schools with their six or eight hundred thousand scholars will furnish a plentiful supply of ministers for the future. But to whom shall the heathen look for the present or for the future? We, or such as we, must go to them or they never, never, can hear of the Saviour of the world. Each must decide for himself whether he will take them the Gospel, and God will call us to account for our decision. Remember that missionaries are *sure* of success. The promise of the unchangeable One has been given that the day of mourning to Zion *shall* be ended—that her walls *shall* be called Salvation and her gates Praise—that the sons of the Gentiles *shall* come bending unto her, that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

“He which testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016

